

report be engrossed for a third reading? If objection is made, then a majority of the members shall decide upon the question of engrossment, and after the engrossment of a report is ordered, the secretary shall have the same printed as engrossed. After any report of a committee has passed to a third reading, it shall not be in order to amend the same, except by the consent of the majority of the members elected to the Convention."

Mr. STIRLING. My motion is to suspend the rule.

Mr. DENT. In reply to the inquiry of the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stirling) I would say that I have very frequently known bills to be engrossed before being read a third time, and the amendments which have been adopted on the second reading properly inserted in the engrossed bill, otherwise it would be impossible for the members of the Legislature to know upon what they were voting.

Mr. STIRLING. I perhaps went a little too far in saying that it never was the case that a bill was engrossed before being read the third time. But it certainly is the fact that at every session of the Legislature bills are taken up from the clerk's desk, read the third time and passed before they are engrossed. It has even been the practice in many cases for bills not to be engrossed until after the session of the Legislature has closed. The engrossment before the third reading is a parliamentary fiction, I admit; but it is a fiction sustained by the uniform legislative practice of this State.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. I desire merely to say that I do not see that we shall expedite matters at all by suspending the rule and putting this report upon its third reading to-day. We have on our tables reports of several other committees, and can take up any one of them and proceed with it, allowing time to the committee on engrossment to have this report as amended properly engrossed, and have it printed. We can now order it to be engrossed, and make it the special order for some day next week.

Mr. STIRLING. It can be engrossed by the committee after its third reading, as well as before.

Mr. CHAMBERS. This practice of trusting these things to a committee, or to any one, is a very dangerous practice. There is no advantage to be gained by passing finally upon this report to-day rather than to-morrow, or the day after. I rise chiefly, however, to call attention to the danger of this experiment. In the last Convention, the one of 1850, there was the same anxiety to hurry through the body a portion of its work. The result was that we had not a fair copy before us to examine, but entrusted that work to others. And a very important portion of the Constitution, as adopted by the Convention, was left out in the committee room, where the last re-

vision was made. It was solemnly determined by the Convention, after full discussion, that the judges of the district courts should not hold office after reaching the age of seventy years. But no such provision as that is to be found in the Constitution. It was placed in the custody of somebody, as is now proposed, to complete the work, and that provision was left out of the Constitution entirely. Now, let us have this report fully and fairly engrossed and printed, so that we can leisurely examine it, and then we can understandingly vote upon it.

Mr. STIRLING. I made the motion, when these rules were under consideration, that all reports should be actually engrossed before they were read a third time. But so far as I was aware, the proposition seemed to meet with some opposition on the other side of the house. I withdrew it, however, because I found that I had inadvertently introduced it at a wrong stage of the discussion. I concede that, as a general thing, reports ought to be recopied before being read a third time. I would not do otherwise, except where the circumstances would seem to justify it. But few amendments have been made to this report, and the secretary will not have to copy more than fifteen or twenty lines, so that practically it will amount to the same thing as if it was actually engrossed. I think, therefore, we might wind up this report now. I think that events are moving very rapidly, and if we are not more prompt in our action they will catch up with us.

Mr. MILLER. The fifty-third rule, I think, is as much a part of our rules as is the fifteenth. And the fifty-third rule absolutely requires that this report should be engrossed and printed before it is read the third time. Now, to suspend that rule, the suspension must take place under the operation of the forty-ninth rule, which requires a three-fifths vote.

The PRESIDENT. The fifteenth rule is confined exclusively to reports.

Mr. MILLER. The fifty-third rule applies to reports also. There would seem to be a conflict between those two rules.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. I would suggest that those rules stand precisely as articles in our code. Where there is a general law and a local law, the local law applies. The fifteenth rule is a local rule, and of course the general rule must give way where the local rule applies.

Mr. CLARKE. If we could have this report printed and brought in here to-day, then the fifteenth rule might apply. But if we cannot have the report printed and laid before us to-day, then I think the fifty-third rule must apply. That rule reads—

"If objection (to the engrossment) is made, then a majority of the members shall decide upon the question of engrossment, and after the engrossment of a report is ordered, the